CHANDLER TO BE CALLED JULY 14

But Next Time Under Oath—Duplantier

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BATON ROUGE (AP)—The legislative's Mafia committee dropped its "informal" questioning of a newsman Thursday when he refused to say where he got information on Mafia influence in state government.

Chairman Adrian Duplantier said the joint legislative committee wants David L. Chandler back—but next time under oath.

"This committee does not intend to have any more informal conferences, rendezvous or hearings with Mr. Chandler," he said at a news conference after the encounter.

Chandler gave the committee a stack of documents and papers compiled during research for his Life magazine article which said the criminal Mafia still dominates Louisiana, despite Gov. John J. McKeithen's two-year-old pledge to uproot it.

The hitch came when the committee got down to questions. Cicero Sessions, Chandler's lawyer, said the questions were merely attempts to identify news sources involved.

TO FIGHT ATTEMPTS

"Don't keep coming to this man and asking for his informants," Sessions said. "I'm not going to let him tell you."

Duplantier, a senator from New Orleans, said the stack of printed information would be studied for possible investigative leads—but may never be made public by the committee.

"We are not going to be a vehicle to smearing people," he said. "If Chandler is not willing to swear to the accuracy of these documents why should we release them."

Sessions said he would fight any attempt to put Chandler under oath during testimony because anything he might say at a formal hearing could cause dire complications involving two libel suits—to-

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taling $12 million—pending against Chandler and Life.

Duplantier said Chandler, of New Orleans, will be subpoenaed to testify on July 14—five days after the 60-day legislative session ends. He said the delay was to allow time for the court fight certain to ensue.

LIBEL SUIT FILED

Sessions stood ready to fight the subpoenas in Federal court in a suit which also challenges the constitutionality of the committee itself.

The next committee session comes Tuesday, with Gov. McKeithen scheduled to appear as a witness under oath. He has called the Life article a pack of lies, and Chandler's reluctance to testify under oath an attempt to "smear and run."

At McKeithen's order, the state filed a $10 million libel suit against Life and Chandler.

The informal conference between Chandler and the seven-man committee got off to a rocky start. It never did smooth out.

First came a hassle over whether Sessions could bar everybody except committeemen and newsmen. Then came a sharp exchange over references to the meeting as a "hearing."

'DAVID, SHUT UP'

Sessions said the conference was in no legal sense a hearing. When Chandler, seated beside him, ironically suggested it might be termed a "rendezvous," Sessions snapped: "David, shut up."

Sessions said his earlier insistance that the public be barred, including Gov. McKeithen, was to prevent the conference from becoming a "Roman circus."

The conference was held in a city courtroom, before court convened. Sessions had refused to have it in the Capitol Building, where the governor would have free access to any hearing room.

Sessions denounced the committee's adjournment without finishing its "informal" interrogation of Chandler.

He said the committee had proposed the 10-day truce which led to the informal conference agreement and that Chandler was ready to lay out his information.

ATTORNEY ANGERED

The agreement was reached in a meeting at New Orleans in which the committee dropped its subpoenas for Chandler rather than plunge into the all-out court fight over them.

Session said the committee questions to Chandler reminded him "of the man whose doctor tells him he has cancer and he tries to shoot the doctor instead of getting cured."

Sessions said he waited in Baton Rouge for more than five hours for information "about a schedule to resume our informal conference."

Sessions said he suggested extending the armistice but was turned down.

The attorney said he was disappointed by "The categorical refusal of the committee to listen to Mr. Chander about the Ashton J. Mouton affidavit annexed to the W. W. McDougall report to Gov. McKeithen."

"This is very perplexing to us," Sessions said in a prepared release.

'READY, ANXIOUS'

Chandler, Sessions said, stands "ready and anxious to resume the conference so that we may complete what we agreed to do."

"Failure for this to be accomplished certainly shall be through no unwillingness or failure to cooperate to carry out the agreement so far as we are concerned," he said.

Sessions rejected the logic of the Duplantier decision not to release the documents.

"We would have no protection from further libel suits if we released the documents ourselves," Sessions said. "I know why they don't want to release those documents and it's not because they don't want to do David Chandler any favors. There are some pretty explosive things in those documents."

Magazine Reporter Before Legislative Committee

—AP WIREPHOTO.

LIFE MAGAZINE reporter David Chandler (left) looks toward the camera as he appeared Thursday before a legislative committee investigating Mafia influence in the state described in the magazine. With Chandler are his attorneys (from left) Robert Barkley, Cicero Sessions (back) and Dennis Cross. From left in background are Sen. Claude Duval, attorney Tom Malik, attorney Gordon Kean, Sen. Adrian Duplantier and attorney John Parker.